



# King's College

TAUNTON

## Boarding Policy, Principles and Practice

**Policy Date:** September 2024

### Responsibility

**Individual:** Head of Boarding  
Deputy Head Pastoral

**Review Cycle:** (Annual)

**Next scheduled review:** September 2025

**Last interim review:** December 2024

## **Boarding Principles and Practice**

King's College aims to provide a caring and stimulating boarding environment, where boarding contributes to pupils' overall development. Learning to live and grow up in a boarding community offers opportunities for pupils to develop as individuals in a number of important ways:

- Developing values – from experience and sharing come respect, tolerance, courtesy and a growing responsibility for others (practised particularly as mentors and prefects)
- Developing self-awareness and resilience – becoming aware of one's strengths and weaknesses and those of others
- Developing increasing physical and emotional independence and independence of thought, particularly valuable in preparing for life post-King's

There are six houses at King's College, three girls' houses and three boys' houses, all containing a mix of boarding and day pupils. Evenings and weekends see a range of activities both in school and off-site for pupils to involve themselves in and to develop their talents and interests. Opportunities for leadership, present in many co-curricular activities, are also promoted through the prefect system, which is an important part of the pastoral structure in our boarding houses.

### **Our boarding practice aims to:**

- Promote the welfare, safety and health of every individual.
- Foster a sense of community and belonging among our pupils, encouraging positive relationships, mutual respect, and a supportive atmosphere.
- Provide the academic resources, study spaces, and support to help our pupils excel in their studies
- Facilitate opportunities for personal development, encouraging pupils to explore their interests and talents.
- Prioritise the mental and physical well-being of our pupils through wellness programs, counselling services, and initiatives that promote a healthy lifestyle.
- Encourage independence among our pupils, helping them develop essential life skills that prepare them for future challenges.
- Offer a variety of recreational and social activities to create a balanced and enjoyable boarding experience, fostering a sense of camaraderie and fun among our pupils.
- Establish transparent and open communication channels with parents or guardians, keeping them informed about their child's progress and well-being.
- Encourage teamwork fostering an environment where pupils can work with each other to achieve common goals.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills within the boarding community.
- To continue to raise awareness and embed equality, diversity and inclusion amongst our community.

Our driving aim is for our pupils to be fulfilled and a general state of happiness and this has at its heart the need for them to feel secure and cared for by well-qualified and experienced staff who are well disposed to children and who are supported in their caring tasks by regular and appropriate INSET.

A boarding education provides opportunities to encourage the development of both the individual and the community and is also a means to instil and develop personal values.

### **Fitness to Board**

Attached at Appendix A is our Fitness to Board Policy, which should be read in conjunction with the Boarding Policy, Principles and Practice.

The Fitness to Board Policy will be reviewed alongside this policy on an annual basis by the Head of Boarding and the Deputy Head Pastoral.

Appendix A

## Fitness to Board Policy

### 1. Introduction

The wellbeing of all our pupils is paramount at King's College, Taunton. This policy outlines the criteria and procedures for assessing a pupil's fitness to board, ensuring a safe, healthy, and supportive residential environment.

### 2. Objectives

To ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all our pupils.

To provide a clear framework for assessing and supporting pupils' fitness to board.

To establish a process for addressing concerns related to a pupil's fitness to board.

To ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, and parents/guardians at King's College, Taunton.

### 4. Criteria for Fitness to Board

A pupil is deemed fit to board if they meet the following criteria:

**Physical Health:** The pupil must be in a state of physical health that allows them to participate in school and boarding activities without posing a risk to themselves or others.

**Mental Health:** The pupil must have a level of mental and emotional stability that enables them to handle the boarding environment's demands, including communal living, academic pressures, and social interactions.

**Behaviour:** The pupil must demonstrate behaviour that is respectful, cooperative, and conducive to a positive boarding environment. They should adhere to the school's behaviour policy.

**Self-Care:** The pupil should have the ability to manage their own personal hygiene, medication (if applicable), and other daily living requirements with minimal assistance.

**Criteria for Continued Boarding:** Establish clear criteria for determining whether a pupil can continue to board. This might include improvements required in health and well-being, consistent academic performance, and positive social interactions. Make sure these criteria are communicated clearly to all parties involved.

### 5. Assessment Process

#### Initial Assessment:

**Pre-Admission:** All prospective boarding pupils must complete a health questionnaire and provide medical history, including any existing physical or mental health conditions.

**Medical Examination:** All pupils undergo a health check upon induction at the school at the Health Care Centre. The school may require a health examination by the Health Centre Team or a registered doctor to assess the pupil's fitness to board.

**Ongoing Assessment:**

**Regular Health Checks:** Boarding pupils will undergo periodic health checks by the school nurse or designated healthcare provider.

**Monitoring:** Boarding staff will monitor pupils' behaviour, social interactions, and overall wellbeing, reporting any concerns to the appropriate school authorities.

**Social Skills:** Evaluate the pupil's ability to interact with peers and adults, adapt to group living, and maintain relationships.

**Emotional Maturity:** Assess the pupil's emotional stability and independence, focusing on their ability to cope with separation from family, manage emotions, and handle the challenges of boarding life.

**Academic Performance:** Review academic records to ensure the pupil can handle the academic demands of the boarding school. This may include assessments of learning abilities, special educational needs, and study habits.

**Houseparent/House staff check-ins:** Implement regular check-ins with Houseparents and House staff to discuss the pupil's adaptation, social integration, and any concerns they may have.

**Daily Routines:** Track attendance, participation in school activities, and general behaviour within the boarding community. Use these observations to identify any emerging issues that may require intervention.

**Support Services:** Ensure that the pupil has access to counselling services for emotional and mental health support. Regularly encourage pupils to use these resources when needed.

**Parental Involvement:** Maintain open lines of communication with the pupil's family, providing regular updates on their progress and addressing any concerns from both sides. Encourage family visits and involvement in school activities.

**Incident-Based Assessment:**

**Concerns Raised:** If concerns about a pupil's fitness to board arise, an initial review meeting will take place between the Houseparent and the Deputy Head Pastoral.

Establish a protocol for early identification of issues related to health, well-being, or academic performance. Ensure there is a clear pathway for intervention, which may involve meetings with the pupil, parents, and relevant staff. If required, a further review meeting will take place that may involve some or all of the following as decided by the Deputy Head Pastoral (Or the DDSL's in their absence) the pupil, parents/guardians, Health Centre staff, and relevant school staff will be convened.

**Crisis Response:** Develop a crisis response plan for situations where a pupil's fitness to board becomes a concern, such as sudden illness, mental health crises, or severe behavioural issues. This plan should include steps for immediate care, communication with parents, and decisions about the pupil's continued stay in the boarding house.

**Evaluation:** If the pupil's situation does not improve, or if there is a significant risk to their well-being, outline an escalation process. A thorough evaluation of the pupil's health and behaviour will be conducted, which may include consultations with external medical or mental health professionals. Schedule regular review meetings with the pupil, houseparent, and other relevant staff to assess the pupil's overall boarding experience. Adjust support strategies as necessary to ensure the pupil's ongoing fitness to board.

## **6. Support and Interventions**

**Individual Support Plans:** Pupils identified as having specific needs will have a Pupil Risk Assessment developed, outlining accommodations and support strategies.

**Counselling Services:** Access to counselling and mental health services will be provided to support pupils experiencing difficulties.

**Health Services:** Medical support, including medication management and emergency care, will be available through the school's health centre.

## **7. Temporary or Permanent Removal from Boarding**

**Temporary Removal:** If a pupil is deemed temporarily unfit to board, alternative arrangements will be made such as an agreed and appropriate period living with their parent/guardian, and a reintegration plan will be developed to support their return.

**Permanent Removal:** In cases where a pupil's needs cannot be adequately met within the boarding environment, permanent removal may be considered. This decision will involve consultation with parents/guardians, healthcare providers, and relevant school staff, ensuring the pupil's best interests are prioritised.

## **8. Appeals Process**

Parents/guardians have the right to appeal decisions regarding their child's fitness to board. Appeals should be submitted in writing to the Headmaster's PA within 10 days of the decision. The school will review the appeal and respond within 14 days.

## **9. Confidentiality and Record Keeping**

All information related to a pupil's fitness to board will be treated confidentially and stored securely using the software programme MyConcerns. Maintain detailed records of all assessments, interventions, and communications related to the pupil's fitness to board. This includes health reports, meeting notes, and action plans.

Access to this information will be limited to those directly involved in the assessment and support process.

**10. Staff Training:**

Provide ongoing training for staff on recognising and addressing issues related to pupils' fitness to board, including mental health first aid, child protection, and pastoral care skills.

**11. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Boarding and Deputy Head Pastoral to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with current legislation and best practices.